

3. The Preparedness Checklist: What You Need to Know

Emergency Numbers

Post emergency numbers by all your phones (fire, police, ambulance, your physician, etc.). Teach your children how to call these numbers and when it is appropriate to do so. Include emergency numbers for water/sewer, electricity, gas and the National Poison Control Center, 1-800-222-1222.

Utilities

Know how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at the main switches or valves and share this information with each family member. Keep any tools you will need near gas and water shut off valves. Remember, turn off the utilities only if you suspect the lines are damaged or if you are instructed to do so. *Do not turn off gas unless you suspect a leak or local officials advise to do so.* If you turn the gas off, you will need a professional to turn it back on. It might take several weeks for a professional to respond. In the meantime, you can be without the means to heat your home, make hot water or cook.

Fire Extinguisher

Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguishers (ABC type), and where they are kept.

Smoke Alarms

Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near the bedrooms. Follow local codes and manufacturer's instructions about installation requirements. Test monthly.

Escape Routes and Safe Spots

Determine the best escape routes out of your home. Find two ways out of each room. Also, find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster. (For example, if a tornado approaches, the lowest floor of your home and an interior room or closet with no windows is your best safe spot.)

Insurance Coverage

Check if you have adequate insurance coverage. Homeowners insurance does not cover floods and some other major disasters. If you are in an area that can flood, talk with your insurance agent about getting flood insurance.

Stock Emergency Supplies and Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit

Keep enough supplies in your home to meet your needs and those of each family member for three to five days. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit with items you may need in an evacuation. Store these supplies in sturdy, easy-to-carry containers such as backpacks, duffel bags or covered trash containers.

INCLUDE:

- Three- to five-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day) and food that won't spoil. Include a manual can opener.
- One change of clothing and footwear and one blanket or sleeping bag per person.
- A first aid kit that includes your family's prescriptions and medications. Include contacts or an extra pair of glasses.
- Emergency tools including a battery-powered radio, flashlights and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash (small denominations) or traveler's checks.
- Sanitation supplies including toilet paper, soap, plastic garbage bags and disinfectant.
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members.
- Important family documents in a waterproof container. Keep the originals of all important financial and family documents in a safe place. You will need accessible records for tax and insurance purposes.

If Electrical Power is Lost

1. Check to see if neighbors have power. If they are also without service, call your local power company.
2. Use a flashlight or battery-operated lantern. Do not use candles for emergency lighting. Candles and kerosene lanterns are fire hazards.
3. Turn off all major appliances. They could overload electric lines when power is restored, causing a second outage.
4. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Food can be kept cold for a day or two if the doors are kept closed.
5. Use portable generators cautiously. Make sure they are outside in a well-ventilated area. Refuel a generator only after it has cooled.
6. In cold weather, drain pumps, supply lines, water heaters and boilers — these can freeze when the power is lost. So can traps in drains of tubs, sinks, commodes, washing machines and dishwashers. In order to avoid burst pipes, close the main water valve and open the spigots and supply lines and drain them.
7. In advance, provide your power company with a list of all life-support equipment required by family members. Develop a contingency plan that includes an alternate power source for the equipment or relocating the person.

First Aid/CPR

Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR class as a family.

Inventory Home Possessions

Make a visual or written record of your possessions to help you claim losses in the event of damage. Include photographs of cars, boats and recreational vehicles. Get professional appraisals of jewelry, collectibles, artwork or other items that may be difficult to evaluate. Also, photograph the exterior of your home. Include the landscaping that may not be insurable, but does increase the value of your property for tax purposes. Make copies of receipts and canceled checks for valuable items.



FIRE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPILL POWER OUTAGE WINTER STORM FLASH FLOOD TORNADO HURRICANE TERRORISM FIRE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPILL POWER OUTAGE WINTER STORM FLASH FLOOD TORNADO HURRICANE TERRORISM

4. Maintain Your Plan

Quiz
Review your plan every six months and quiz your family about what to do.

Drill
Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills on a regular basis.

Restock
Replace stored water and food every six months.

Test
Read the indicator on your fire extinguisher(s) and have it/them recharged by a professional according to manufacturer's instructions. Also, test your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least once a year.



For More Information, Visit These Web Sites:

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management:
www.vaemergency.com
(Your most up-to-date Web source for emergency information.)

The Virginia Department of Health:
www.vdh.state.va.us

The Federal Emergency Management Agency:
www.fema.gov

American Red Cross:
www.redcross.org

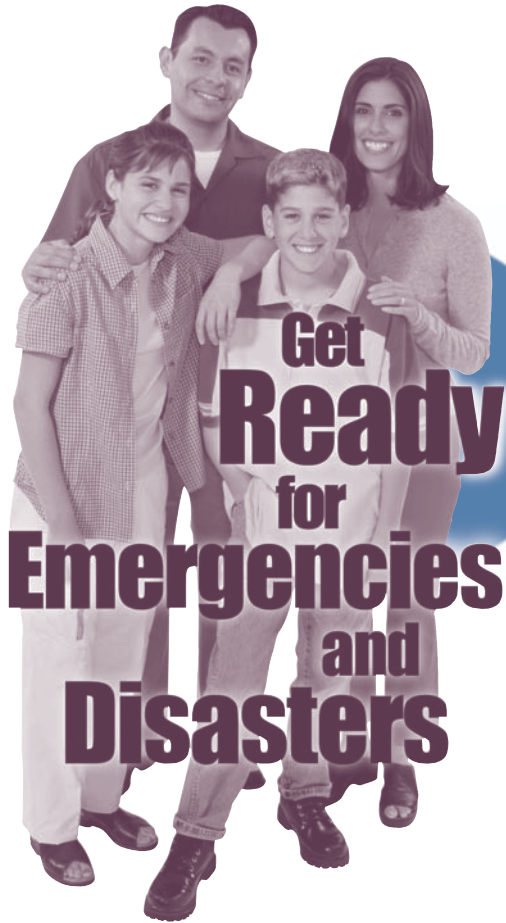


For more information about this publication, call (866) 782-3470 (Toll Free)

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Local Contact Information:

(If this area is blank, check the government pages of your phone book for your locality's emergency management office phone number)



Developing Your Disaster Plan